

August 31, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

This is, once again, the time when we prepare for the new academic year while reflecting on the achievements of the past year. As we do so, I hope you are all taking a bit of much-needed and well-deserved time to refresh, relax and rejuvenate. At this time last year, I wrote “this has been a year unlike any that we have experienced before.” Never did I expect to be saying the same thing again this year. Once again, I am proud to say that we have risen above the many challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a community and an institution, we have continued to flourish.

People Make AUC

I regularly refer to AUC as a community rather than an institution. This is because it truly is the people who make us who we are. Our faculty and staff work tirelessly to ensure that our students receive all of the benefits of a liberal arts education, and are given constant opportunities to learn, grow and thrive.

We are excited to be welcoming exceptional new faculty to campus for AY 2021-22. At the time of writing we have hired 35 new faculty, of whom 60% are international.

In order to ensure that we continue to attract, hire and retain excellent candidates, last year I established a Task Force of Faculty Search Processes and Guidelines, Chaired by Dr. Helen Rizzo. The mandate was to develop a guide for conducting faculty searches at AUC, to cover all stages (pre, during and post-search) including strategies, tips and best practices. The guide includes detailed and specific steps for each stage of the search, as well as recommendations for ensuring that we are attracting the best possible applicants, and that the process is transparent, straightforward and positive for the applicants and the search committee members. In addition to Dr. Rizzo, the committee members were: Dr. Mohamed Abou Zeid, Dr. Zeinab Amin, Dr. Nizar Becheikh, Dr. Laila El Baradei, Dr. Yehia Ismail, Dr. Magda Mostafa, Dr. Mona Said, Dr. Kathleen Saville, Dr. John Swanson and Dr. Robert Switzer. The draft guidelines are under review and I hope to use it in the upcoming hiring season.

Over the past year our faculty had ongoing opportunities to participate in professional development activities, despite the fact that most of our faculty were teaching remotely. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CLT) provided ongoing support for the enhancement of the online teaching and learning experience, through fourteen 3-hour Institutes for Online Learning attended by 571 participants. This is in addition to over 370 individual consultations, the yearlong Faculty Institute of Learning and Teaching, and a new online training workshop attended by 325 new teaching assistants.

The capacity building for our faculty goes beyond teaching trainings. Our faculty were given access to further development opportunities through our partnership with [Academic Impressions](#), a group that provides extensive online leadership and professional development resources specifically designed for faculty and staff in higher education. Using their academic impressions memberships, AUC faculty

participated in over 500 different types of professional development activities. Among some of the most highly-attended virtual workshops and conferences were:

- [Strategies to Create More Engaging Online Courses](#)
- [Time Management: Focusing on Your Priorities and Purpose](#)
- [Recognize Student Distress in a Virtual Environment](#)
- [Foster Inclusion in the Classroom Through Formative Assessment](#)
- [Incorporating Virtual Labs and Lab Kits in Your Courses](#)

To help ensure that our faculty receive the support they need from the moment they join AUC, last year the Office of the Provost piloted a new faculty mentoring program. The program included both one-on-one and group mentoring, to increase the exposure of new faculty to a broad array of experienced colleagues. One-on-one mentoring was handled by departments and covered knowledge about department specific standards and practices, as well as discipline-specific academic and career guidance in addition to specific needs of the mentee. New faculty who participated in the program greatly benefited from the mentoring experience, they noted that one-on-one mentoring allowed for focused guidance and the growth of mentoring relationships which contributed positively to the successful results they achieved during their first year. They all appreciated the exceptional support and guidance they received from their mentors and were in agreement that the mentorship relationship should continue beyond the first year. I wholeheartedly thank mentors who invested time to support their colleagues. Two domains of group mentoring were also piloted to promote positive interactions, build meaningful and supportive relationships among peers, provide a forum for reflective dialogue and create a support network for each mentee: The teaching and learning domain and the liberal arts domain. Based on the success of the pilot, the program will now be offered to all new faculty.

There is no question that our faculty are at the heart of AUC's spirit and success. Their records of teaching, research and publication are central to our educational mission. Our faculty are regularly recognized in Egypt and around the world for their noteworthy accomplishments. Please look at our dedicated "[Faculty National and Global Recognition](#)" page to view these achievements in detail.

The end of the academic year is inevitably a time for changes within the academic administration. A number of senior academic leaders are either retiring or returning to their teaching roles, and they deserve special mention and thanks. Following two years as Interim Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Science, Dr. Zeinab Taha is now returning to her full-time role as Professor of Arabic language and linguistics. I am indebted to Dr. Taha for her tireless commitment while leading HUSS over the past 2 years. After five years as Dean of the School of Sciences and Engineering, Dr. Hassan El Fawal is stepping down and will be leading SSE's Institute for Global Health and Human Ecology. I thank Dr. Fawal for his service as Dean, and look forward to the growth of the IGHHE under his leadership. In addition to Drs. Taha and Fawal, two other members of the Provost's Council are leaving the Council due to their retirement. Dean of Students Dr. George Marquis has retired from AUC after years of dedicated service to the university. Mrs. Yvette Issacs, Assistant Provost for Faculty Affairs, will be retiring later this summer. Ms. Isaac works tirelessly to support all of our faculty administrative processes including hiring, reviews, leaves, and tenure and promotion. Her fine attention to detail and her unparalleled work ethic have been a tremendous asset to me personally and

to all AUC faculty. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Taha, Dr. Fawal, Dr. Marquis and Mrs. Isaac for their service to AUC and their invaluable contributions to the Provost's Council.

I am looking forward to the contributions of two new Deans. Dr. John Meloy has recently joined AUC as the Dean of HUSS, coming to us from The American University of Beirut. Dr. Lotfi Gaafar has assumed the position of Dean of SSE, as I recently announced.

Transforming Our Learning Environment

Despite the many challenges that students across the world have been facing due to the pandemic, last year we received a record-number of student applications. We received 4004 undergraduate applications (including transfer students) for AY 2020-21. For freshman applicants, our selectivity was 40%, and we saw an enrollment yield of 78%. At the graduate level, our selectivity in Fall 2020 was 48%, with a yield of 66%. New graduate enrollments in Fall 2020 were 49% higher than they were the previous year. At the time of writing this letter, I am highly encouraged by the over 3600 undergraduate applications received to-date.

We continue to place a strong emphasis on providing financial support to our students, to enable every student to concentrate on their learning and achievements. An average of 45% of our undergraduate students received support, with a total of 2,531 undergraduate students received financial support from AUC in Fall 2020 and 2457 in Spring 2021. At the graduate level, almost half of our students received tuition support in the form of graduate fellowships, with 485 students receiving Fellowships in Fall 2020, and 488 recipients in Spring 2021. I extend my gratitude to Magda Fayek, who is currently serving as Interim Senior Director, Student Financial Affairs & Scholarships, and Matthew Hendershot, Associate Dean of ALA and Special Advisor to the Provost for Financial Affairs and Scholarships. Matthew and Magda have been exploring ways that we can restructure our approach to student financial support, in order for AUC to be accessible to more students of high caliber. New models of student financial support are currently under review, to support our goals of attracting and retaining Egypt's best and brightest learners.

We are extremely grateful to the organizations and individuals who contribute to our financial support mission. Last year I reported on a generous USAID Scholars grant. I am delighted to share that USAID's multifaceted faith in AUC's successful management of its current portfolio of awards prompted USAID to add an additional \$1.8M to the original \$36M, bringing the USAID Scholars funding to a new total of \$37.8. In early February 2021, AUC received a \$10M award, "USAID-AUC Merit Award (UAMA)". The fixed award aims to support 108 partial scholarships. These awards are a vivid showcase of AUC's longstanding and continuous relationship with USAID that has prospered since 2017 and is still flourishing.

We also continued to receive scholarship and fellowship support for our undergraduate and graduate students from individuals and organizations including Abdullah Al Ghurair Educational Program Ltd, Dr. Ahmed and Mrs. Ann El Mokadem, Mr. Bernard Selz, Egyptian Refining Company, El Sewedy Electric Company, the Hadramout Foundation for Human Development, The Jameel Education Foundation, Dr. Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor, Qalaa Holdings Scholarship Foundation, and others. We

remain extremely grateful to our friends and donors, who enable many students to attend AUC who might not have otherwise had this opportunity.

It is critically important that our students have the best possible experience at AUC from the moment they are first admitted to the university. This requires that we have systems of seamless, timely, and high-quality processes with the ultimate objective of enabling AUC to provide the best learning and character-building experience. Accordingly, last Spring I formed a university wide Committee on Advising, Mentoring and Registration (CAMR) to explore ways to enhance three interrelated functions which are considered the cornerstones of the students' development at AUC; (1) Academic Advising, (2) Mentoring, and (3) Registration. Chaired by Dr. Ahmed Abdel-Meguid, the Committee conducted meetings, research and students focus groups to identify challenges and propose potential solutions. The Committee's recommendations included specific suggestions of ways to enhance the culture and processes. Additionally, they suggest that we make better use of our Business Intelligence data for better forecasting and to provide real-time diagnostics of problems that arise during registration. I am now following up on a number of their recommended action items, in order to put their recommendations into practice. I extend my gratitude to Dr. Abdel-Meguid and to all of the committee members: Eman Mourad, Senior Manager, Office of Student Services & Development, BUS; George Marquis, (former) Dean of Students; Hani Henry, Associate Professor of Psychology and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, HUSS; Iman Megahed, AVP for Digital Transformation; Jillian Campana, Professor, Associate Dean of HUSS. Lotfi Gaafar, Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, SSE (now Dean of SSE); Matthew Hendershot, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Academy of Liberal Arts; Noha Saada, Senior Director, Academic Advising Center; Rasha Mahmoud, University Registrar; Rasha Morshed, Officer, Office of Student Services & Development, BUS, Shahjahan Bhuiyan, Associate Professor of Public Policy and Administration and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, GAPP.

We are continuously seeking out ways to enhance AUC's quality of education, which remains our central mission. This past year we have finalized our "Learning Spaces" strategic plan. This is our plan to enhance our learning spaces as an integrated learning landscape for the AUC community — a blend of formal and informal, physical and virtual learning. The first phase of the plan is currently being implemented and by fall three active learning classrooms (small, medium and large) as well as a Pedagogy Innovation Lab (the Sandbox) will be ready to use and pilot. We also received a \$650,000 ASHA grant which will be used to retrofit an additional 6 digitally empowered next generation general purpose classrooms and one Hyflex experimental classroom equipped for hybrid flexible teaching and learning. The implementation phase of these learning spaces will start Fall 2021.

All of our work in the area of educational quality is done to ensure the success of our students. I am pleased to share that we have recently launched a peer tutoring initiative, which has been piloted in two courses, Economics 2061 "Mathematics for Economics I" and Engineering 3202 "Engineering Analysis and Computation I." This initiative will soon be expanding into a university-wide peer-to-peer tutoring unit, led by Dr. Fady Morcos, the newly-appointed Assistant Provost for Innovative Learning Experiences, reporting to Dr. Aziza Ellozy. In addition to launching the tutoring unit, Dr. Morcos will also be working closely with faculty to develop innovative learning experiences where our students will be challenged to address real-life problems.

Last year I announced that the Office of the Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation had developed an academic program review process that ensures each degree program at AUC is reviewed once every six years to enhance academic quality, enrich student experiences, and ensure that resources are used efficiently and allocated to support AUC's mission and strategic objectives. Implementation of this process began in our academic programs in Spring 2020. In three semesters we completed comprehensive reviews of 25 programs (10 undergraduate and 15 graduate programs). We identified issues related to enrollment strategies, marketing and recruitment, integration of career development learning into the curriculum, and external funding opportunities, among others. School deans worked with department chairs to prepare action plans to implement recommendations of the review committees.

In addition to this internal review process, our programs continue to be assessed by various accreditation bodies. The accreditation process serves as an external quality assurance mechanism, helping to ensure that we are engaged in continuous improvement, and that we are held accountable to the highest standards of educational quality. This year we had five programs in the School of Sciences and Engineering that undergo reaccreditation visits by ABET (The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology). ABET is the primary US-based accreditation body, serving programs in the applied and natural sciences, computing and engineering. On the basis of visits that took place in AY 2020-21, our programs in Computer Engineering (Bachelor of Science), Construction Engineering (Bachelor of Science), Electronics and Communications Engineering (Bachelor of Science), Mechanical Engineering (Bachelor of Science), and Petroleum Engineering (Bachelor of Science) have been reaccredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET until September 30, 2027.

As I announced last year, the School of Business has introduced three new undergraduate business programs to its portfolio: Bachelor of Business and Entrepreneurship, Bachelor of Business in finance, and Bachelor of Business in marketing. This is in addition to its existing Bachelor of Business Administration in management of information and communication technology. Along with the new programs, an elective experiential learning course, Cooperative Education (Co-Op), is now offered in business undergraduate programs, enabling students to experience on-the-job training on a full-time basis with external entities. <https://www.aucegypt.edu/news/co-op-program-leap-experiential-learning-school-business>. We have also made enhancements to our MBA program which now spans two years instead of three, with a general program with two career paths substituting the previously existing track specializations.

All of us who know and love AUC recognize that our commitment to integrating the liberal arts philosophy into all of our programs – both academic and co-curricular – are at the heart the AUC experience. This past Spring, the Academy of Liberal Arts (ALA) launched the Liberal Arts Integrative Learning Initiative, hosting activities that connect interdisciplinary academic and research discussions with real life issues and local and global questions. This initiative set the campus as a stage for a seamless, integrative educational journey. Activities included a Big Questions podcast episode with Dr Mona Amer on cultural influences on health behaviors, a panel discussion on safety and freedom and a seminar discussing the translation of Fahrenheit 451. I urge faculty to play an active role in this initiative.

The Office of the Core Curriculum within the ALA supports faculty from across the university to enhance the integration of the liberal arts approach into their courses. This year the Core Curriculum Office supported the participation of over 50 faculty from across AUC's disciplines at conferences on Global Learning, Transforming STEM education, General Education, Pedagogy and Assessment and the MENA Universities Summit. The Core Curriculum Office has also continued to work with individual departments to enhance the integration of liberal arts pedagogy and assessment into the majors, through extensive review and feedback on program liberal arts contributions - last year working with seven programs.

As I have addressed in the past, the issue of global rankings is one that we -- along with many higher education institutions around the world -- must deal with. Last year I announced the formation of a Standing Committee on Rankings, under the leadership of Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation, Dr. Zeinab Amin. Part of this committee's mandate is to look at the AUC's performance in the two major higher education ranking systems – Quacquarelli Symbols (QS) and Times Higher Education (THE). One of the biggest challenges that these assessments are based on a combination of factual (objective) criteria as well as perceptions. Another is that while AUC greatly encourages faculty research, we are not a research-intensive institution and yet approximately 60% of the criteria for THE and QS rankings are research based. The committee also addressed the matter of employer perception, as this is another key component in the ranking process. This past year we performed among the top 34% of universities worldwide in the QS ranking. This is noteworthy, as is our increased score in the “academic reputation” indicator. However, our performance declined in other indicators, as did our overall score. As noted by the committee, addressing these challenges is not a quick-fix, and requires a longer-term strategic commitment. Some of their specific recommendations address increased employer market penetration, enhancing research productivity and visibility, and further promoting international collaborations. As we move forward with both our short and longer-term strategic planning, I am committed to keeping these issues at the forefront and to working with faculty and colleagues from across the university to face this challenge head-on in our efforts of continuous institutional improvement.

The successes and achievements of our students is the ultimate testament to the quality of an AUC education. While it's not possible to highlight each individual success, I am including below a sampling of the many academic accomplishments of our students over the past year.

- Alena Kahle, representing AUC, won the Africa and Middle East Regional Winner in the category "Social Science: Sociology and Public Policy" by the [Global Undergraduate Awards](#), the world's leading academic awards program.
- [The Cairo International Model United Nations \(CIMUN\) was awarded the Outstanding Delegation award, the most prestigious award in National Model United Nations \(NMUN\) for the 11th consecutive year.](#)
- [MBA Student Kayee Au wins the silver place for AMBA's Student of the Year Award.](#) The MBA Student of the Year Award recognizes students who have shown exceptional career potential and who AMBA believes can act as ambassadors for the high quality of accredited MBAs and the opportunities these programs provide for students from a wide range of different personal and professional backgrounds.

- [Two AUC teams qualified to participate in the final phase of the Babson Global Student Challenge 2021](#). Our two teams ("Cannula" and "Waste Net") led by Randa El Bedawy, associate professor of management, were among 8 finalist teams from around the world.
- [Two AUC PhD Students, Alaa Abbas and Ahmed Tarek, won the Young African Talents award](#), part of the international ENI Awards which are dedicated to the best global research projects involving energy and environmental sustainability.
- [Hana Wali, an undergraduate Business Administration student, founded the Egypt Gives charitable organization](#) providing shelter and assistance to Egypt's homeless community.
- [Undergraduate students Nour Mamdouh, Sabrina Eshra and Yasmin Abd Elrahman won the Egyptian national round of Proctor & Gamble's CEO Challenge](#), advancing to the next round representing the Arab Region.

Expanding Our Research Enterprise

We did not let the pandemic or the shift to virtual learning stand deter us from our commitment to promoting the importance of research. On the contrary, we invested directly in pandemic-related research through last year's call for Pandemic and Post-Pandemic research proposals. The 10 funded projects, with a budget of \$200K, led to a series of different intellectual outputs, including 11 research papers, an infographic, a 45 hours course, a mobile platform, a technology-based, multi-modal solution and a possible patent.

In 2021 year our faculty published 374 peer-reviewed articles, which is an increase of 12% as compared to last year. Out of those, 187 were published in Q1/Q2 journals. In order ensure that more of these are published in Q1/Q2 journals we must continue to emphasize and support efforts of faculty publication in top-quality journals. This will in-turn help to enhance our QS ranking, which I addressed in greater detail above.

Despite the challenges, AY 2020-21 was another record-breaking year for securing external funding at AUC. Working closely with faculty and teams across the university, the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) facilitated 78 awards, valued at \$45.4M. This includes 25 externally-funded research awards in the total amount of \$4.2M. AUC also continued to provide direct support to faculty research through a total of 62 intramural grants with a combined value of EGP 10.7M. These included 34 conference travel grants, 10 research grants, 6 Minigrants, 2 conference organizing grants, 4 teaching and learning enhancement grants, 1 distinguished visiting professor and 5 scholars without stipend.

This year, [The AUC Research and Creativity Conference \(RCC\)](#) was successfully launched in the virtual mode for the first time, hosted on the Eventtus digital platform. RCC invited faculty and students, graduate and undergraduate from Egyptian national universities (Nile University, Zewail City of Science and Technology, and Egyptian Japanese University of Science and Technology) to participate with their research. [The 15th annual conference for Excellence in Undergraduate Research, Entrepreneurship, and Creative Achievement \(EURECA\)](#) also ran virtually for the first time, with 177 participants from AUC and other universities presenting.

The Bartlett Fund for Critical Challenges is now in its third year. Two of the original awardees, Dr. Osama Hosny and Dr. Rasha Allam, successfully completed their projects. This year we added two new projects, for a total of five projects. The new projects are: Exposome-wide association study of Parkinson's disease (PD) in an Egyptian cohort. This is one-year project for Dr. Mohamed Salama with a budget of \$45,186 and will be complemented by another external fund for part two of the project. The second new project is Operationalizing Gender Policies for Impact, which is a one-year project for Dr. Hania Sholkamy with a fund of \$29,983.

Fostering Our Impact on Egypt and Beyond

AUC prides itself on engaging closely with the world around us, within Egypt and the region. Our School of Continuing Education (SCE) continues to play a leading role in such engagements. This year SCE once again hosted its annual Nile TESOL (Teachers of English as a Second Language) Conference. For the first time in its 25-year history, the conference was run fully virtually. This in no way deterred the active engagement of participants from across the region, with over 3000 people attending.

SCE also continues to craft customized programs for government agencies and private business, and in partnership with the Government Egypt. These include training over 1100 students at the Egyptian Policy Academy, as well as projects with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Military Production and the National Judicial Training Center). SCE also delivers the Access program for Egyptian high school students, helping to prepare them to continue on to higher education.

Earlier this year, [AUC signed MOUs with the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport and Al Alamein International University](#) to enhance collaboration in higher education. The agreement between AUC and AASTMT aims to explore and promote cooperation and collaboration in the fields of teaching and scientific. AUC will provide strategic support through our Executive Education programs, School of Continuing Education, and capacity-building programs in various areas including research, finance, human resources management, digital transformation and externally funded opportunities.

[Our School of Business has launched The African Regional Trade Professional Certificate, a specialized executive education program, in collaboration with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs \(MoFA\)](#), represented by the Egyptian Agency for Partnership of Development (EAPD).

By mid-2020 and drawing upon the success of the current University Center for Career Development (UCCD) and the interest of the Ministry of Higher Education and additional Egyptian universities, USAID requested AUC to scale up the UCCD program to serve more Egyptian youth by establishing additional centers for career development at other universities. USAID approved adding **\$14.5M** to the ongoing **UCCD**, thus increasing the total to **\$33M** and extending the grant till 2025. The stretched scope will establish a total of 30 sustainable career centers in 22 public universities in Greater Cairo, Delta, Canal Region, North Sinai and Upper Egypt. This will result in a massive impact on the employability of approximately 1.5M youth. [In addition to the expanded scope, the project also launched the Virtual Career Platform.](#) The UCCD 2021 Virtual Career Platform is the first collective

venue connecting students and graduates of ten Egyptian public universities with organizations offering employment opportunities throughout the year.

The USAID-funded Center of Excellence in Water project made significant strides during the past academic year. Sixty two students are on full four-year scholarships to study Water Engineering at Alexandria and Ain Shams universities. Some of these students are simultaneously attending English-language classes at our School of Continuing Education. The project developed and published the first ever “National Water Research Roadmap.” Over 200 faculty from five Egyptian universities were trained in using a learning management system, and 12 faculty were trained to provide training on Innovative Teaching Strategies. Over the course of the last year, AUC and Alexandria University signed MOUs with other Egyptian partner universities, public sector and industry institutions, to further broaden the reach and impact of this project.

Last summer, AUC launched the [AUC Speakup Initiative](#), to educate the community about and to help prevent incidents of sexual harassment. One of two key components of this initiative are the Dialogue Series, which engages the broader Egyptian community to raise awareness and advance this critical conversation. [Eight events were held throughout the past year](#). In addition, AUC established the Office of Institutional Equity, which provided both live and online [Anti Sexual Harassment training](#) to all AUC faculty, staff and students.

[AUC and Al Ahly Sports Club signed an MOU to introduce sports management education in Egypt and the region](#). The partnership will support the development of sports management education in Egypt and the region by developing a range of programs addressing a broad spectrum of topics, including sports management, marketing, finance, event management, and sports psychology and ethics, sports economics and branding, and sports law, providing participants with practical know-how and a hands-on experience.

Last year I had the pleasure of sharing that the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) announced that they would be establishing the [J-PAL MENA Office, their 7th regional office, to be housed in our School of Business](#). J-PAL is a global research center headquartered at MIT, working to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence, through randomized impact evaluations to answer critical questions in the fight against poverty. Over the past year the J-PAL MENA team has been hard at work, driving partnerships and research projects to help alleviate poverty in Egypt and the region. An MOU was signed between J-PAL MENA and the Nasser Social Bank (NSB) to design and implement impact evaluations and advance evidence-informed decision-making. The MoU furthers J-PAL MENA, and NSB's cooperate to measure the impact of selected financial services and programs implemented by the bank to improve the lives of low-income segments of society in Egypt. The agreement also facilitates the potential scale-up of NSB's development programs that are found to have a positive impact in improving financial inclusion outcomes.

J-PAL MENA also partnered with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development to establish the [Egypt Impact Lab](#). The lab will aim to advance evidence-informed policymaking by assessing the impact of the Ministry's initiatives to reduce poverty and unemployment and its efforts to promote family planning.

Beyond Egypt, J-PAL MENA has partnered with the Royal Hashemite Court and the Ministry of Labor in Jordan to lead a webinar for Jordanian policymakers and donors on the future of work in Jordan post-Covid-19. During this session, J-PAL and MoL representatives presented on labor market lessons, drawing on research findings from Jordan and worldwide.

AUC's Venture Lab (V-LAB) has partnered with a number of organizations in Egypt and the region to support entrepreneurship. [V-LAB and the Sharjah Research Technology and Innovation Park \(SRTI Park\) are partnering](#) to support entrepreneurship and strengthen the startup ecosystem in the MENA region. Through knowledge sharing between AUC Venture Lab and SRTI Park, this agreement will provide guidance and support to startups in the Egyptian and Emirati markets. Here in Egypt, V-LAB worked with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development to launch a capacity-building program for incubators and accelerators. V-LAB also joined forces with the Egyptian Information Technology Industry Development Agency (ITIDA) to offer startup Launchpad, a capacity-building platform that empowers technology entrepreneurs to launch their startups. This new eight-week program offers tech entrepreneurs all over Egypt extensive training, networking, and skill development opportunities to help them effectively develop business ideas, increase their startups' chances of survival and success.

AUC was awarded two projects as part of the UN Women-UNIDO Joint Programme "Women Economic Empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth." The School of Business' Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CIE) was awarded the Women Economic Empowerment Program - Entrepreneurship Support project, while the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy (GAPP) Executive Education was awarded the Women Economic Empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth - Training for Employment (WEE-TFE).

CLOSING

It is clear from the highlights that I've captured here that the AUC community continued to achieve and thrive despite the unimaginable challenges of the past year. This serves to confirm my often-repeated comment that as a community, we are both strong and resilient. This success of AUC belongs to each and every one of us – our students, our staff and our faculty – who worked tirelessly over the past year to ensure that we could rise above every one of the trials that we encountered.

As I am finalizing this letter, we are continuing to come together as a community and prepare for our full return to campus this Fall. If you have not already done so, please be sure [to upload your vaccination status](#) in order to be able to access campus and attend classes. I also ask you to take a look at our [#AUCBackToCampus](#) pages, including our [Campus Guide](#) and [Fall 2021 FAQs](#). We continue to take all of the needed precautions, and I am eagerly awaiting the sights, sounds and spirit of our students being back on campus.

Sincerely,

Ehab Abdel-Rahman, Provost